

The

# MESSENGER



of OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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# AFRICAN SISTERS

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS are evident among the African girls, who on hearing the call of our Lord leave all to follow Him. The White Sisters have initiated over 1,100 girls to the religious life in 17 Native Novitiates, each representing a diocesan Congregation, most of which are dedicated to our Blessed Mother. On the next page you will find the story of the BANABIKIRA or the Daughters of Mary of Uganda.

The Native Sisters take the three vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, just as we do, and live a truly religious life. Many of them have become efficient nurses, and it is remarkable to see little bush girls of yesterday tenderly caring for the sick in our dispensaries and hospitals or even using the microscope, endeavoring to find out the cause of some high fever.

Others have obtained a Government diploma and are now qualified teachers doing a great work in our schools, thus playing an important role in the education of the future generation.

Not all, however, are capable of following higher studies, but they all find a way of serving God and they do become experts in teaching catechism.

Some of these Sisters were the daughters of pagans and had to be very brave and fight hard for their vocations; but, with the help of God's grace, they won the battle.

Sometimes too there is a fierce struggle in the young heart which is tempted with other desires; but at the bottom of it, confusedly at first, then more imperiously, a feeling of overwhelming love makes itself known and consequently forces the heart to make the right choice.

"Wherever I went," said a young novice, "I heard these words in my heart: 'You must work for God alone!' I could not leave my mother so I did not listen to this voice within me. Afterwards I had no more peace of mind until I finally listened and now I am glad that I obeyed the Voice."

The story of a young girl of Tanganyika is a fairly typical one.

Monica who is sixteen attended the school that is maintained by the White Sisters for the daughters of the chiefs. A likeable person, intelligent,

industrious and ideally suited to make a good wife and mother, she was promised at an early age to a young man who in every way was worthy of her. But the high ideals of the religious state pursued her and she longed with all her heart to strive for perfection under the observance of the canonical vows. She was determined to break her engagement, returning the gifts which had been given for her, accompanied with the following note:

Daniel:

I hear the voice of God calling me to Himself. I who loved you so much will still love you, but as a brother. I am not angry with you, nor am I leaving you because you have said or done anything wrong. I would certainly have accepted if God had wished me to marry. But He is calling me. Tell me, Daniel, can I refuse Him? Is He not my Master?

I will pray that you may find a good wife and you must pray that I will be faithful to my vocation. I repeat that I have no ill feelings against you and I know that you will not be angry with me.

Your ex-fiancee, Monica

The next day she received the following:

Dear Monica:

Though I am suffering terribly, for my heart is broken, I do not oppose your decision to give yourself to God. You belonged to Him before you belonged to me. He created you and you are His property. I do not have the right to take for myself what belongs to another. So do not alter your decision. Do not take my sorrow into consideration. I am nothing. Just follow God's calling courageously. I will pray that you know how to serve God best.

Go in peace. But obtain for me through your prayers a wife as good as you; so that, I may have peace in my home, the peace of God.

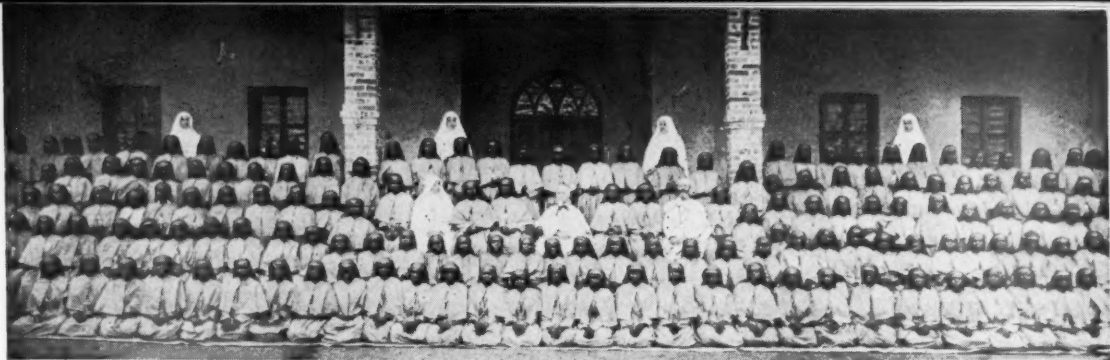
We will meet again in Heaven. I understand that it is not because you have something against me. I am sad but resigned to the will of God.

Yours, Daniel

These lines need no comment.

## *Aspirants to the religious life*





# The Native Sisters of Uganda

*"I am Black but Beautiful"* - [ Canticle of Canticles ]

## How They Originated:

Owing to the striking qualities of the Baganda people, and their spirit of proselytism, faith spread rapidly in Uganda. It also brought about the inception of the Native Sisterhood.

At the very beginning of the foundation of the Uganda Missions, even before the White Sisters' arrival, some older women had offered their services to Bishop Streicher to teach catechism to the little children. Later on, seeing the White Sisters at work, the young girls were attracted by the beauty of virginity; and the idea of devoting themselves to God, strongly appealed to them.

## Handmaids of the King:

On the other hand, Providence seems to have chosen the path of native tradition to lead to so important a development. The Baganda chiefs had an ancient custom of offering young girls to their kings, whose property they became. These girls were often chosen among the chief's own children with the result that the sovereigns were generally surrounded by a chosen group of handmaids.

One day, in March, 1901, two notable personages of Uganda called on Bishop Streicher. After the long greetings required by native politeness the spokesman recalled this custom among his countrymen and added: "Is there a greater or more powerful King than Jesus Christ, the son of God and God Himself?" We wish to venerate Him as such and beg Him to accept our daughters for His service in religious

life." The girls accompanied their parents and themselves pleaded with the Bishop to receive them; in fact, they had even previously applied to the White Sisters as aspirants to a religious career. His Lordship was only too pleased to approve and encourage these girls and confided them to the White Sisters under whose care this nucleus was to develop into what is today known as the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary. Other girls followed, and in 1908, a novitiate was inaugurated at Villa-Maria, Bishop Streicher's residence; twelve native girls took the veil and two years later they made their first annual vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. This little seed developed marvelously, and in 1925, the so-called "Bannabikira" (Daughters of Mary) were recognized by the Holy See as a distinct religious family.

## Difficulties:

In pagan countries vocations for religious life do not develop without difficulties. The greatest of these is the rapacity of the girls' relatives. Father, brother, uncle, whosoever has a right over them is expecting a substantial dowry, mostly in cattle, sheep or goats, at the time the girl is to be married. If she wants to be a nun her people have to give up the hope of getting the goats or sheep she is worth, which means a material loss for the family; and that is why pagans show opposition to religious vocations.

Moreover, many a young girl has already been promised in marriage when only ten or eleven; the dowry, consisting of sheep and

goats, which has been paid to her parents, very often has been given away, eaten perhaps. If the girl thus sold wants to become a nun, her father or brother has to give back what he received for her dowry, and how is he to find it?

#### Majuba:

Here is an illustration: there was a girl called Majuba, whose father was still a pagan. She asked leave to join the Novitiate; he refused. The reason was that the girl had already been sold long ago to a polygamist, the goats had been given and eaten, and the old man had no money to pay them back. "All right," said Majuba, "I know what to do." She went out and got work—carrying heavy loads—after her daily duties at home. Little by little she collected the money, the amount of her dowry. When the last penny was earned she brought the sum to her father: "Here is the price you received for me, now I am free; God is calling me, I am going." And she fled to the Novitiate.

#### Their Work:

These Native Sisters are precious helpers for the foreign missionaries especially in preparing little ones for their first Holy Communion, teaching children, nursing the sick and assisting the dying. Who can, better than they, know and understand their very own people? . . .

The most gifted of them are selected to be trained as teachers in the Normal School of

Bwanda, directed by the White Sisters; others are trained as nurses.

In 1928, after three years of hard study, ten of these Native students obtained their official teaching certificates. Both the Inspector and the Superintendent of Education who are Englishmen, after visiting the school in Bwanda, wrote praiseworthy reports on both the Native students and the White Sisters. One report to the Director of Education ended as follows: "The standard in the Normal School is very high and reflects great credit on the Sisters in charge of the instruction of these teachers."

The Native Nuns have now their own Mother House in Bwanda, their own Mother General, Mother Ursula, a native of Uganda, who, it is interesting to note, was formerly a little slave rescued by the White Fathers. She is aided by four assistants also Natives. They number in Uganda, according to the latest statistics, four hundred professed Sisters, eighty-five novices and postulants.

It may interest our Readers to know that the Mother House of the Baganda Sisters is located in the province of Buddu, included in the Vicariate of Masaka, which has the Most Reverend Joseph Kiwanuka as Bishop—Uganda's first son elevated to the Episcopal dignity.

It is a great achievement, one that hardly anybody would have believed possible seventy years ago. The young Church of Africa, still in its infancy, has already offered to her Divine Spouse a rich crown: beside the Martyrs, three Native Bishops, Native Priests and Sisters. The Church of Christ may well be proud of her African Daughter and let her apply to herself the words of the Canticle: "I am black but beautiful."

Sister M. Christian, W. S.



The  
Mother House  
at Bwanda

## The African Sisters' Training

THE YOUNG GIRLS who enter the Native Sisters come from any one of the tribes in the territory. The White Sisters teach them all kinds of manual crafts besides their regular schooling. However, there is a Mistress of postulants and one for the Novices who takes charge of their religious formation. The spiritual training of the novices is given first place during the time of the Novitiate.

The transformation of their characters is no easy task. The African girl possesses many natural desirable qualities: the respect for authority, a real desire to overcome her shortcomings coupled with a great simplicity. However, it takes time and patience to bend the wills especially of those who showed the greatest determination and had the greatest number of difficulties to overcome at their entrance.

The Mistress of Novices sought to know what passed through their minds when they were speaking with God. She asked them to relate some of their thoughts and reflexions while at prayer.

"In reading what the soldiers did to Jesus," said one, "I was angry and said to them, 'Let Him alone. What do you think you are doing?' And it seemed that they answered, 'You have struck Jesus too.' I wanted to deny it but I remembered that by my sins I struck my Savior . . . and that many times. I had to be silent, and kneeling before Him, I begged with all my heart that He forgive me."

Another spoke thus:

"I, too, when I want to commit a sin place a blindfold over the eyes of Jesus who sees even in my soul. I pretend that I do not know better. I try to think of other things but His eyes follow me and make me feel ill at ease. I cannot keep Him from seeing everything. I want to be honest with Jesus and not evade His Divine glance, but always act as if He were looking at me. I thought of this today while I was doing my work and tried to be helpful to others."

These thoughts show the influence that meditation well made has on their everyday life.

One of the vows they take is poverty, the detachment of the goods of this world. But does the African girl possess anything that she would find difficult to renounce? Certainly. A number of these Sisters are daughters of chiefs. Furthermore, no matter how little they possess,

the instinct to own is deeply embedded in the human heart. Did not St. Peter think he had made a great sacrifice in leaving all to follow Our Lord, as is given evidence when he asked what his reward would be.

The Virtue of Chastity is a specifically Christian one. To renounce marriage requires a great deal of abnegation for the African girl, since maternity is the sole glory of the woman.

And what can we say of obedience? Their inborn respect for authority is certainly an aid to the practice of this virtue. But it remains a fact that a passive obedience; that is, not to disobey an order, is not sufficient to fulfill one's vow. A complete submission to the directions and wishes of a superior leads progressively, by the effort it supposes, to the fulfillment of the true character of a religious.

We have no desire to minimize the part that divine grace plays in the realization of these virtues. It would be a difficult thing to draw a line between divine aid and the part of personal effort . . . It is a collaboration of the second with the first.

Not all arrive at the same point but those who have the necessary intelligence and fortitude and are judged worthy to remain in the Novitiate understand what is expected of them and build a strong foundation on which to build an intense spiritual life.

While giving the novices this training to make them worthy religious, they are not made to feel strange in their environment. Time is given to recreation during which they enjoy singing a great deal. They also go for long walks through the woods or in the mountains.

The time of the Novitiate passes very quickly and, at last, the long waited day of their profession arrives.

Sr. Paul Augustine, W. S.





## A Ceremony of Perpetual Vows

A GROUP OF NATIVE SISTERS from the Vicariate of Tabora in Tanganyika Territory were ready to pronounce their perpetual vows after renewing their annual vows for ten years. The ceremony was held in the parish church of Usongo, where the Novitiate is located.

The Apostolic Vicar officiated assisted by a White Father. At nine o'clock His Excellency, the White Fathers and native clergy, the White Sisters and the African Sisters met at the door to escort the elect of the day to their places

After Mass the Bishop blessed their religious emblems, the ring and rosary, giving them to each one. While the choir sang the TE DEUM with all their hearts, the newly professed Sisters lay prostrate before the altar.

On leaving the church, the YOU-YOUS of the women filled the air and the young girls danced to honor the "Mamas" of their own race.

May our Lord bless our dear African sisters and make of them holy religious. May He also grant the gift of a vocation to many more of our girls so that, they may win numerous souls



while the choir sang JESU CORONA VIRGINUM. The church was over crowded for the occasion.

A White Father gave the sermon in which he stressed the beauty and grandeur of the religious life, the happiness of those who give themselves to God, and the gratitude they should feel towards their Divine Master for all the graces He had showered upon them.

At the Communion, they knelt before the open tabernacle, and with fervor and generosity, pronounced the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience until death. Then they received their Divine Spouse into their hearts. Only they and God knows the secrets they exchanged in the intimacy of their hearts.

to His Divine Heart. May our Daughters of Mary led by their Heavenly Mother give of themselves for the Glory of God.

After their first annual vows, the sisters are sent to the various posts throughout the Vicariate where they are a great help to the Missionaries. They teach school and catechism in the villages, care for the sick, are sacristans and make the hosts. They are devoted to the duties that are given them, sometimes even above their strength.

But what makes them so willing, so apt in the work they do, so humble in success, so loved and respected by everyone is the fact that they are, above everything else, good and fervent religious.

Sr. Marie Samuel, W. S.

# The Native Religious in Social Service

SOCIAL SERVICE WELFARE is as necessary in the equatorial countries as in any other. There are always those individuals and organizations that need orientation and adjustment to their surroundings and conditions. The little Native Sister already is, and will become even more so, an efficient worker in this field.

You may wonder what the Native Sister is like when she leaves the novitiate. Let us even suppose that she has completed several years of labor for the welfare of her neighbor. What is she and what is she able to accomplish for others?

Let it be understood that she is not an abnormality, a sort of second-rate imitation of the white women. During all the time of her training an effort was made to conserve her personality, so that when she begins her work among her own, she is not the least bit strange or out of her element. She is still one of them. It is only that she has acquired a certain reserve and self-confidence that makes her range of influence even wider. Europeans are always astonished to note the pleasant and intelligent look on their faces. They have let the spirit of God penetrate into their hearts and it is now He who radiates His personality through them.

What is her field of action? It has already reached tremendous proportions—she teaches in the primary grades, holds domestic sciences classes, goes to distant mission branches to prepare the children to receive their First Communion, visits the homes, helps in the dispensaries and aids in instructing young mothers to care for their new babies. This summarizes her actions but only God can judge the influence she has among her own. In proportion to the fulfillment of the tasks assigned her, her field of activity will grow as social service among the negro is still in its infancy.

What does there not yet remain to be done

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concerning personal hygiene? How many instructions could not be given regarding the maintenance of the home, their clothes, or the food they eat and the care of the small children? Personal cleanliness and the care of what they already own is given too little attention by the native.

Their moral hygiene is no less to be desired. The work of the Native Sister in this case needs to be done with the utmost discretion. Not to assume a superior air to command, is often the best way to be obeyed. It is better to reason and persuade another of the advisability of a certain course of action, to let the idea germinate so that with the help of divine grace it may be followed. God does not use any other. Does He argue or scold us into a course of action? No, we are the ones to argue.

A simple explanation and the condemnation of an evil given by a Sister of their own race penetrates into their spirit and heart, in spite of themselves. And even if they would like to forget what they had been told, especially because they would like to forget, they remember. When the time of trial approaches, sickness or maybe a death, it returns to them and almost infallibly bears fruit. The little Sister perhaps will never know the result of her labors, but what difference does that make. It is not for her own satisfaction that she labors.

An immense task lies before the humble native sister. Without fear and with gentleness, she bends the Africans beneath the sweet yoke of Our Savior.

If she trusts in His help, will she not be victorious?

Sr. Claire of Assisi, W. S.



**The Sister Sacristan prepares the ciborium.**



**The novices and postulants are**

***IN MANY MISSIONS the African the White Sisters in caring for the chism and in all kinds of social missions, they have learnt to take dispensaries.***

**African Sisters assist a White Sister at the hospital.**



**When the African Sisters return to their country they are always happy to seek a**







ts are taught the principles of music.

*African Sisters work side by side with  
for the sick, teaching school and cate-  
social service works; while in other  
take the responsibility of schools and*

to their Motherhouse for their annual retreat,  
seek advice of the Mistress of Novices.



**The Native Sister makes a  
competent secretary.**

**The African Sister is efficient in giving  
care at the dispensary.**



# The Little Servant of Our Lord

Mama Claudia tells her own story

*(The Africans call the Sisters Mama, the White Sisters also received the same title)*



I WAS BORN AT USONGO (Vicariat of Tabora, British East Africa) in 1931. Usongo is a very small village hidden right in the middle of the bush; but it is the proud possessor of a church, a really nice church, built by a White Brother, with stones which are so plentiful here.

The inhabitants of the village are the Wanyamwezi and the Wanyaramba. Many of the Wanyamwezi are Catholics, while the Wanyaramba still hold to pagan beliefs and customs, which they continue to practice especially in certain circumstances such as death or any misfortune. They are still in the deepest darkness.

My paternal home was quite near the church so I could go there as often as I wished. At the other side of the church was the White Fathers' house and a little further the school for boys and girls.

I was only four years old when my father sent me to school; there I learnt many things; reading, writing, and how to count. I was shown how to sew and played many games that were new to bush children. I liked school very much, but especially the games. All the same, sometimes I did not want to go to school and I pretended to have a headache, but my mother soon found out that it was laziness.

Each day at noon I hurried home to eat after which I helped my mother to wash the pots and sweep the front of the house. When all was finished I would run quickly back to school.

During the holidays I had to take the cows out to graze. They were happy days because I had plenty of time to play with my dolls that I made with clay. I loved to dress them in little pieces of cloth just like real people. Back home again I would play house. I would be mother and my two little brothers would be my children.

My mother used to grind her flour on a big smooth stone, so I had to have one just like hers, but I used to grind sand instead of flour,

which I would cook and my children would have to eat. I would work as I had seen my mother working. I would rub the children all over with oil to make them nice and shiny.

I was in the third grade when the White Fathers were obliged to close the girls' school because they were unable to pay the teachers. Much to my regret I had to stay at home.

When I was ten years old, Father made an important announcement in church. He said that we could have White Sisters for the Mission if the Christians would build them a Convent. Everyone helped. Strong men, under the guidance of a White Brother, blasted and shaped stones for building; others made bricks of clay which were dried in the sun. Women and children carried water to the selected spot. This was not as easy as one might think. Carrying water does not mean opening the tap . . . it means walking for twenty minutes down the hill with empty pails, then climbing up again with them when they are full. At the end of 1942 the convent was ready and the White Sisters arrived . . . but to our great surprise, they did not come alone; they were accompanied by a little group of Native Sisters. What a joy for Usongo! Christians and pagans alike came to meet the Sisters. The children led the way. At their head was the school band playing the best of their repertoire . . . They were so pleased to have Sisters for their school and to see them come to gain souls for our Lord: Souls of their grandparents, perhaps the souls of their mothers or big sisters, the souls of so many who still lived in paganism.

The White Sisters were in charge of the formation of the Native Sisters and they lost no time in opening a Novitiate. At the same time the girls' school which had been closed for so long was reopened. Naturally all the little girls, including myself, were placed in Grade I. After one week I went to Grade II; at the end of the second week I went up again,

finally at the end of a month I began Grade IV. I was so pleased to be back at school again.

But I was not always as good as I should have been. I remember, one day during the sewing lesson Sister gave the other girls nice pieces of colored material to make little dresses but I received a plain white piece. I was jealous, for I too wanted to make a brightly colored dress. I absolutely refused to sew and remained there with my elbows on the sewing table and my chin in my hands, looking with angry eyes at Sister. She scolded me severely but with no effect; I would not move. My father was called and before long I had to give in.

When I finished school I was fifteen years old and I had a strong desire to become a religious. I asked my father and mother permission to enter the convent. My father consented at once because he had been a catechist at the mission for many years and he understood so well that the will of God should come even before that of parents. When I left home he blessed me saying, "My child, may God be with you, in your soul, in your work, all your life. If you persevere in your desire to belong to God . . . good; if on the contrary it is found that you have no vocation, you will return. As long as you live your father's house will be open to you." I was a Novice when my father died. I cried much that day, remembering his farewell words.

On September 3rd, 1944 I entered the Convent. My parents, brothers and sisters accompanied me and were pleased with my choice. I was received as an aspirant and with my companions I continued my studies. The following year after a retreat of three days, a group of us were admitted to the postulate. I was one of the chosen ones and I received the Postulant's Habit. The two years I spent in the postulate were passed mostly in studying. Another retreat, this time five days, and we were allowed to take the habit and short veil, thus becoming novices. The novitiate lasted two years, from the day I received the habit. I took my religious name "Mama Claudia." In the novitiate we learn to live as religious. Much effort is needed to become a Little Servant of Our Lord, do well all that He asks, be pleased with whatever He sends, refuse Him nothing.

At last in 1949 the moment came for us to prepare ourselves to take our first Vows. Native Sisters from other convents came to join us for a five days' retreat. Then on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, after Mass in the parish Church, gayly decorated and packed with people, we the five chosen ones, consecrated ourselves to God. We received the long veil of the Professed Sisters and the crucifix which is held by a blue ribbon. After Mass we returned to the convent and the Christians came to con-

## An Extraordinary Vocation

THE DAUGHTER of a Witch Doctor had learned of our religion from her playmates. She not only wished to become a child of God, but a Sister as well. On hearing of her desires, the Witch Doctor locked her in the hut to prevent her from running away. However, after a week or more she managed to escape and was on her way to the mission when she met her father. He was exceedingly angry and through the force of his blows made the girl retrace her steps.

She hurried on ahead of her father and when completely out of sight, climbed up a tree, and from her concealed position, watched her father as he passed by. Then she ran back to the mission.

He thinking she would be home before him, calmly continued on the way. But when he arrived and found out he had been tricked, he became infuriated and called on all the evil spirits to curse his daughter, forbidding that her name be ever mentioned in the family again.

Being thus made free, the young girl remained at the mission and was finally received into the Church and baptized Maria. Later she was admitted into the Novitiate and having all the necessary requirements to make a good religious made her profession. Naturally many and fervent were her prayers for her father's conversion accompanied with heroic sacrifices.

She was sent to a mission station about two days distance from her father's, where she spent herself in God's service.

A few years later the Witch Doctor, being seriously ill, was brought to the mission hospital for care and treatment. When it was made known to him that nothing could be done to save his life, he asked to be received into the Church. He was baptized and then he expressed the wish to see his daughter once more.

Mama Maria was sent for immediately and she hurried back to her father's side. The reunion of the two was touching: the father dignified, and independent even on his death-bed; the daughter bearing a striking resemblance, equally dignified and poised in the white habit of her Congregation. The past was forgiven and forgotten and with all the devotion of a dutiful daughter, she helped her father to die a happy death.

Sister M. James, W. S.

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gratulate us and tell us of their joy. It was a big feast for everyone. The same day I received my nomination for the Mission Post of Ndala to continue to be the little servant of our Lord.

Mama Claudia

# The Lord's Own

Sr. M. Edmonde, W. S.



MAMA YACOB, a Native Sister from Tanganyika, went to her eternal reward October 18th, 1942. The story of this religious proves once more how the loving Providence of God keeps watch over all His children.

Maria was very young when abandoned by her mother. Left to herself the child received her livelihood from charity, here a piece of cloth was given to her, there some food, at another place lodging. Matters went on thus for a time, until one day the mother decided to give the child to the Sisters. She became a boarder at Karema and as she grew in age her intelligence developed and her piety was outstanding. She was pretty, lovable and being of a lighter complexion than her companions, she was favorably noticed among the boarders. A European colonist of the surrounding asked her in marriage. Maria refused: "I will never marry, I want to be a religious."

Having persevered in her determination, she entered the Postulate of the Native Sisters. In 1935 she went to Ujiji to pass government examinations and returned to Karema with her Teaching Certificate. Henceforth her main thought was to perfect her religious life by a fervent novitiate. Two years later, she made her profession with great fervor. Soon, however, a great trial came to strengthen her love: in 1940 obedience assigned her to the Mwazie Mission. It was a great sacrifice for Mama Yacoba: she must leave her native village, the White Sisters, who knew her since childhood, who had been a mother to her and initiated her

to the religious life; she must exchange the warm climate of the plain for the cold mountain air of Mwazie. Faithful to her rule, she went away joyful, sure to always find Jesus wherever she went, Jesus who loves her, guides and helps her.

As a teacher she was very successful. She was loved and respected. All was well until one day her mother came to see her desiring to take her away from her religious life and marry her to an Arab who was also a Moslem. Mama Yacoba absolutely refused to hear about it. The mother tried over and over again, insisting, promising, threatening, all was in vain. She went away decided to use forceful means to come to her end: "My daughter will not finish the year at Mwazie, you will see."

Unknowingly she was prophesying: Mama Yacoba will not finish the year at Mwazie, but she will leave by another door than that which her poor mother wanted to open for her. Toward mid-June she caught a cold at the same time as Mama Koleta, both were nursed by the White Sisters. The latter recovered but Mama Yacoba soon became worse. We feared "safura" a tropical illness. The coughing ceased but the patient did not recover her strength. A Catholic Doctor from Abercorn was called to the mission especially for her. After the examination, he declared: "Her lungs are gone; she may still live a month . . ."

This was the 16th of October. The next day she received the Last Sacraments during a moment of suffocation. She did not think death

was so near and asked the Superior: "When I feel better may I return to Karema, I believe the hot sun will do me good? However if the trip is too expensive and you judge I should remain here, I shall gladly accept your decision."

On the following day she had another spell and realized that she was seriously ill: "I always desired to die young, the good God is hearing my prayers." A Sister suggested that she offer her sufferings for the conversion of her mother, she answered: "Only God knows the tears I have shed over her, willingly do I offer up my sufferings and my life for the salvation of her soul."

In between the spells, she was calm and even joyful.

Around five in the afternoon she said: "I thought I was going to leave today, but I am still here. —You will still have the happiness of receiving tomorrow." She smiled and answered: "If I am awake."

After supper she called for Mother St. Helen, Superior of the White Sisters and said: "The hour has come Mama Elena, 'sasa kwa heri'" (now au revoir).

She kissed her companions a last good bye, thanked for the care given her, and noticing that her speech was no longer intelligible, she still murmured: "Ona midomo inafuka ganzii." (Look my lips are dead), and she slipped into unconsciousness. The Native Sisters and the women began to cry: some moments later she opened her eyes, smiled, and asked "Why are you crying?" Her head then fell back on the pillow never to rise again.

The White Sisters and the Native Sisters surrounded her; the Reverend Father Chaplain assisted her at her last moment. During the prayers for the agonizing, softly, without agony, without fear, Mama Yacoba went to see the good God. Shortly before dying she had begged: "Especially remember me in your prayers," she had promised to pray for the Native Sisters, the Missionaries, for the Catholics, for all Africa.

The danger that threatened the soul of Mama Yacoba was forever over. "The Lord is my Shepherd . . . though I should walk in the shadows of death I will fear no evil, for Thou, O Lord, art with me."

## A New Cook for the Holy Father

*The Sister in charge of the religious formation of the Native Sisters was explaining to the postulants the virtue of obedience. She told them if they made the vow, they would be obliged to go to work in whatever mission was assigned to them by their Superior.*

*"O," said one, "If God wants, I would go to N'boubou." (A few hours distance.)*

*"And I" said another, "would go as far as Tabora." (A few days distance.)*

*"I would even go as far as Rome," insisted a third.*

*Sister somewhat surprised asked her what she would do in Rome.*

*"Why, I would cook for the Holy Father."*

*"But Our Holy Father does not eat Ugali."*

*"I know, Sister, but I would make him some bread and cook meat for him."*

## OBITUARY

We recommend to the prayers of our Readers the souls of:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Linus Schwarze, Trenton, N. J.

Rev. Mother Mary Myles, S.S.N.D., Baltimore, Md.

Rev. Mother Avelline, O.P., Caldwell, N. J.

Mr. John Clark, Metuchen, N. J.

Mrs. Flore Baron, Manchester, N. H.

Mrs. Josephine Znuba, Scotch Plains, N. J.

Mr. Dennis J. Desmond, Metuchen, N. J.

Mr. George Carroll, Jersey City, N. J.

Mr. Peter Kenny, Jersey City, N. J.

Miss Clara M. Liebentritt, Omaha, Nebraska.

Mr. John Geary, Sr., South Plainfield, N. J.

Mr. Nicholas J. Knox, Metuchen, N. J.

Mrs. Mary Reining, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.

Mr. Patrick Smith, Jersey City, N. J.

Mrs. Leona Townley, Plainfield, N. J.

Mrs. Mary L. Caldwell, St. Joseph, Mo.



## The Eloquence of Facts

*Are the Black Sisters fervent? Generous? Zealous? Authentic views gathered here and there will furnish a reply.*

A postulant makes her meditation on her knees, her arms in the form of a cross. Why this singular posture? "I was getting sleepy and in order not to give in, I found this means of overcoming it."

How can one be astonished at the little Black Sisters: a large number of them vie with one another to get the opportunity to be of service, sometime finishing secretly some work started by a companion, etc.

A young Superior has to be repressed in her labors and prevented from doing alone all the painful and laborious work she can find. Naturally active? Certainly not!

In her own home, she was accustomed to an easy going life and she, as an aspirant, was a lazy person who would lie down on the grass instead of watching the children confided to her care.

A Black Sister suffering intensely from headaches, used a treatment which brought her sufferings to a paroxysm. She passed sleepless nights, moving her head backward and forward, seated on her bed in the dormitory. Not a groan did her companions hear from her. Being exhorted to make a Novena to the Baganda Martyrs, whose relics had recently been given them, she said: "If you want to make it, all right. As for me, I prefer to leave Our Lord entirely free to do with me whatever He wills." A fine statement of momentary fervor? This religious suffers off and on, it is true, but for many years, without losing her good disposition.

Sister Anna, the oldest in her Congregation (90 years) continued courageously to take part in work in the fields. "Is it not time that you should stop?" she was asked. "As long as I have these two hands and can lift an ax, I'll work. What I do is for God."

## When Black Turns White

At day break the young girls and children set out to meet the little band of the first Native Sisters coming to help at Saza, Ruwanda. For several days the girls had aided us in preparing the convent for the Sisters of their own race. The material installation of the convent was due almost entirely to the generosity of the natives. All the bricks to build it were carried by the Catholics and catechumens, who would not accept any compensation for their hard work.

When the Sisters arrived, they were imme-

## The Doctor Approves

A European doctor was very sceptical of the efficiency of the African Sisters in caring for the sick. A White Father suggested that he visit a dispensary that was under the supervision of these Sisters.

"I cannot imagine that anyone is very much pleased about it," he said, and accepted the invitation only to be polite.

The Doctor arrived unexpectedly at the dispensary and was amazed to see the order and cleanliness of the two rooms in which the Sisters worked and the confidence of the patients they were treating. Taking the hand of one of the Sisters he congratulated her and remarked: "We have never been able to obtain such good results from the nurses in the bush before."

## Leprosy Rather Than Sin

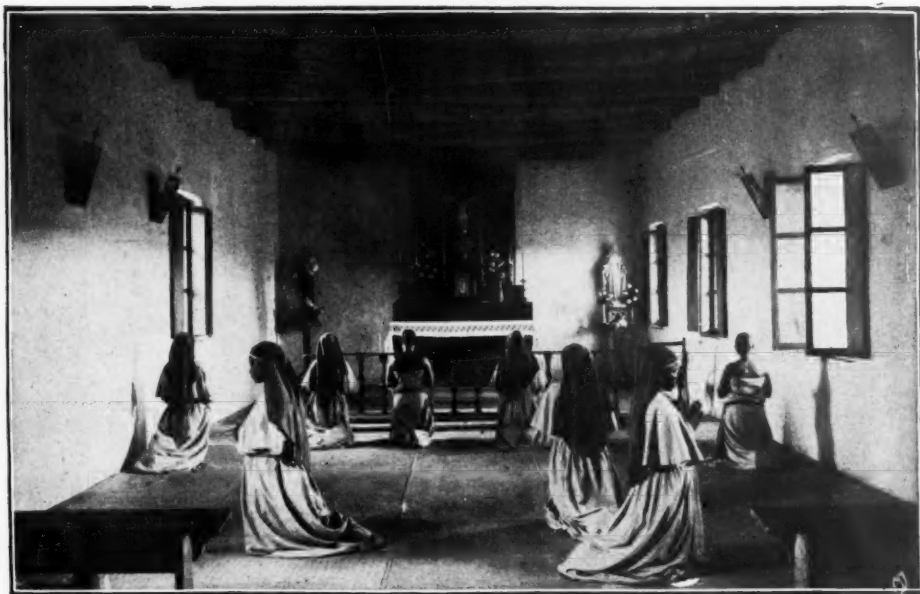
Marie-Anna had hopes of receiving the Holy Habit with her companions on December 8 and to take up again the Religious life after a trial period of interruption. But the diagnosis of the doctor put an end to all hopes! This young Dagari girl represents a sad case — a leper without hope of cure, aspiring to the highest gift and rejected to the common road of life. But better still, Marie-Anna confided to the White Sisters of the Institute: before announcing what sickness she suffered from, Bishop Dupont asked her: "What would you prefer—to be guilty of committing one venial sin or to be afflicted with leprosy?" She answered: "To be afflicted with leprosy." Today, taken at her word by Our Lord, she has no regrets, being persuaded that one venial sin is a greater evil than to have leprosy.

diately taken to church to receive the blessing of the Divine Master, whose interests they had come to further. The multitude assembled to welcome them, also assisted at Benediction.

On leaving the church, each one wanted to greet the Sisters, to see for themselves the girls of their own race, who, like the White Sisters consecrated their lives to God.

An old woman seeing that two of the Sisters were of lighter complexion than the others, took them aside and said: "Courage, soon, yes, very soon, you will be white like the Sisters; but it will take some time before your companions turn white."

## African Sisters at Prayer



ADORING Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus their Spouse.

THANKING Him for the numerous graces He has bestowed upon them, especially for the gift of Faith and for having chosen them to be His alone.

OFFERING to Jesus their hearts burning with love in reparation for the sins of the world.

ASKING strength to persevere in the service of their Master and imploring Him to send more Missionaries to their country, for they know only too well how many thousands and thousands of people are still living in darkness . . . waiting for the first rays of the LIGHT OF FAITH.

BEGGING for numerous graces and blessings for their kind BENEFACTORS to whose prayers and sacrifices they owe their happiness of being children of God.

### GOOD NEWS

*We have just heard the GOOD NEWS that the White Sisters have left the mission of Rushubi in the Rwanda Urundi Territory, where they have worked for many years, caring for the sick, instructing the children, visiting the people in their homes, teaching catechism and countless other things which go to make the day of a White Sister a very busy one.*

*Oh! no doubt you are surprised to hear that this is GOOD news! But it is, because it was decided that our Sisters could safely leave the work of this flourishing mission in the hands of the Native Sisters. This means that several of our Sisters are now free to go to some other part of Africa where people are waiting for them. They will be able to help the White Fathers establish another mission of fervent Christians.*

*Confiding the work of this mission to the Native Sisters gives further proof that Africans, with proper training and help, are capable of shouldering responsibility, of organizing and directing. Anyone who visited Africa just a little over half a century ago would be surprised to see that so much progress was made in so short a time.*



Scenes in the African Sisters' Life

